

schools have increased in participation, scholarship dollars, coaches' salaries, and recruiting expenditures over the past 5 years. As a result, the average number of women athletes per school in the NCAA Division One increased from 112 to 130 over the past 5 years.

Internationally, women's basketball has also become very popular. Many people may not realize it, but 80 million women play basketball worldwide. Let me repeat that; 80 million women play basketball worldwide, an amazing figure.

Last year, I saw firsthand how talented some of those women are when I attended one of the Team USA women's basketball games at the Olympics in Atlanta. It was very exciting and wonderful to see such a large crowd at this event. The USA female basketball team went on to win the gold medal. It is obvious that American women are the best players in the world.

□ 1800

The success of women's sports has proved that America is ready for women's professional basketball. We have built a generation of talented players who can compete internationally, and now it is time to showcase this talent here in our own country. These leagues will offer role models to younger women and promote greater chances for female athletes, continuing the tradition of gender equity in sports, first promoted through title IX.

This Saturday the WNBA will begin its first season, while the ABL is gearing up for a second successful season in the fall. As a Member of Congress, we should honor these professional women athletes and support them. As we congratulate the ABL and the WNBA on their inaugural season, we should also recognize the sponsors, owners, and fans of the leagues' teams for their commitment.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that Members of both parties will sign on as original cosponsors to my bill and pass this resolution in the near future.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN PREVENTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a bill that we call the Government Shutdown Prevention Act. This should be of no surprise to the Speaker or to any of the Members. For some 10 years now I have persisted in introducing this legislation and presenting it through the Committee on Rules and the policy committees and to interest groups throughout the Nation for their support.

Everyone says it is a great idea; that we need some mechanism to prevent Government shutdown, to make sure that when the budget deadline comes and goes that that will not result in a

shutdown, but rather a mechanism that will allow for a transition until a full budget can be produced by the Congress of the United States.

What is so tough about that concept, Mr. Speaker? This last exercise that we had with disaster relief, the administration and the Democrat leaders in the House continued to say that this was an extraneous measure, the shutdown prevention, added to the disaster relief bill.

Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the disaster relief bill was made up 100 percent of money, appropriations, for the flood victims in the Midwest. This money, the billions of dollars that were appropriated, has to take a long period of time before it settles in the hands and the bank accounts of the flood victims. Suppose September 30 comes by and we have not completed the work of the budget and the next day a Government shutdown occurs? It means those people who were supposed to be recipients of disaster relief would get no further checks until we reached a budget agreement.

My bill was very germane then to the disaster relief bill. It made certain that the checks that were going to be issued to the disaster victims would continue beyond the budget deadline of September 30 in the event no full budget was agreed on by the Congress of the United States. It was highly germane and relevant, and yet we heard the rhetoric from the Democrat leadership and the White House that this was extraneous and it would draw a veto because it had nothing to do with flood relief.

It was these same individuals who said this was extraneous, who then voted for a disaster relief bill, Mr. Speaker, that contained these provisions, or this kind of provision. For instance: Marine Mammal Protection Act amendment to allow for the importation of polar bears for the purpose of trophy collection. Mr. Speaker, this was in the disaster relief bill that we just passed.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, is that extraneous to the bill or is it relevant to the bill? They can accept polar bear trophy amendments but not an amendment that would prevent a Government shutdown.

There were provisions that would allow the Small Business Competitive Demonstration Program to provide enhanced competition in the business of dredging U.S. waterways. I ask, Mr. Speaker, if that was relevant to disaster relief, why was not my Government shutdown prevention amendment relevant to disaster relief? I ask these questions but I get no answers.

Further, there was an amendment in this disaster relief that had to do with the Susquehanna River Basin Compact, had nothing to do with disaster relief for the Middle West; to the Higher Education Act of 1965. Nothing; the Relief Food Stamp Act of 1977.

These were amendments, riders, that were in the disaster relief that the Democrat leadership supported whole-

heartedly, even though they know in their heart of hearts that these were extraneous, nongermane, irrelevant to disaster relief. Yet they said, Mr. Speaker, that preventing Government shutdown is extraneous, irrelevant, nongermane; has nothing to do with disaster relief, even though it would be personally responsible for a continuation of funding beyond any budget breakdown.

What is this? I know where we stand. The President and the Democrat leadership would rather risk Government shutdown than allow a transitional budgetary period to make sure that a Government shutdown does not occur and allow the Congress and the President to negotiate a final budget. That is against their political interests. They want the risk of Government shutdown.

Well, I insist that to the last day that I serve in this Congress I will attempt to make sure that the people of the United States know that we are trying to prevent Government shutdown and all the chaos that accompanies it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

TRIBUTE TO MASON LANKFORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WELDON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to pay tribute to a great American who passed away yesterday evening while involved in a State conference involving the fire service of the State of Texas.

Nine years ago, Mr. Speaker, in my first term in this Congress, in an attempt to provide representation for the 1.2 million men and women who every day of the year respond to disasters in this country, I formed what has become the largest caucus in the Congress, the congressional fire and emergency services caucus.